Lambda Letters Project

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All we ask is a member a month

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

This is Part 1 of a two-part article in this newsletter. Part 2 appears to the right.

This month I am asking you to pledge to recruit one new member each month to the Lambda Letters Project. It would be great if that new member could pay dues. But if a person is on limited income, we will gladly waive the dues.

Here is why we are asking you to do this. This year several bills of monumental importance are being addressed by the California legislature. Because there will be tremendous roadblocks to their passage, we must mount the most effective campaign we can to make sure these important bills do become law.

Here are some of the key bills:

Assemblymember Mark Leno has reintroduced his same-sex marriage bill, AB 43. This is probably the most important bill for same-sex couples this year.

Assemblymember John Laird has reintroduced his bill, AB 110, to allow local governments to use state general funds to purchase supplies for their clean needle and syringe exchange programs. Current law prohibits them from doing that. Other sources of funding for these supplies are very limited,

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Please sponsor a bill

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

This is Part 2 of a two-part article in this newsletter. Part 1 appears to the left.

As I mentioned in the other article, there are at least three key bills that have been, or will be, introduced in the state legislature this year. They are AB 43 (the same-sex marriage bill), AB 110 (the Needle Exchange Program funding bill), and a health insurance bill still to be introduced that will provide affordable, comprehensive health insurance for every resident of California. Senator Sheila Kuehl will be introducing this bill.

These bills will each face six votes in the legislature before they can be sent to the governor. Each will have to be approved by two committees in each house and then by the full Senate and Assembly. Each bill will face tremendous opposition every step of the way. It would be wonderful if we could drop 600 to 800 letters of support for each bill in each committee just before the committee vote and deliver the same number of letters to legislators just before each of the floor votes on the bill. That would do a lot to persuade legislators to ignore the opposition to these bills and to do the right thing—vote for them.

To make this possible, I would like to plan three special mailings to you—one for

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Black History Month presentation

By Pat Washington, chair

This notice is posted in the interest of our San Diego members.

In conjunction with the Lambda Letters Project and the San Diego Branch of the NAACP, the College-Rolando Branch Library in San Diego invites you to a Black History Month presentation featuring Assembly Majority Floor Leader Karen Bass, representing District 47.

Assemblymember Bass has the honorable distinction of being the first African-American—and the first woman—to hold this leadership position in the California Assembly.

This event takes place Saturday, February 24, 1–3 PM, at the College-Rolando Branch Library, 6600 Montezuma Road, in San Diego.

It is free and open to the public. Please call (619) 582-5383 for more information or to RSVP, or e-mail *SDNAACPOutreach@aol.com.*

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Lambda Letters progress report

Letters collected

November, 2006	1,849 letters
In all of 2006	306,867 letters & e-mails

Dollars spent

December, 2006	$3,749
In all of 2006	$99,961

Can you help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our Mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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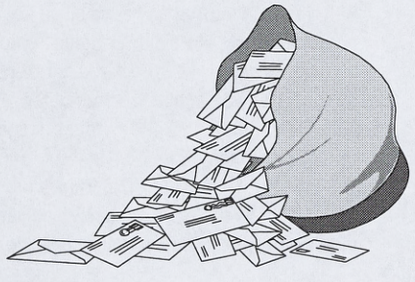

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.
In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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HIV/AIDS issue

Support raising HIV/AIDS funding

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

The new year has begun and the new Democratic-controlled 110th Congress has the duty to finalize the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2007 left unfinished by the Republican-controlled 109th Congress. These are the bills that appropriate money to run the federal government from October 1, 2006, until September 30, 2007. So the passage of these bills is long overdue.

Funding for two key domestic and international AIDS programs, the Ryan White CARE Act and the Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), is at risk and we need your help.

Right now these programs are being funded under a continuing resolution at FY 2006 levels. The new Congress has resolved to proceed with a "joint resolution" that would fund some programs at higher levels until the end of the fiscal year. Now it must decide which programs to include.

Here is what's at stake:

If the CARE Act remains funded at FY 2006 levels, it will be short the $18.8 million needed to support the five new Title I Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) AIDS planning councils added by reauthorization to the existing 51 councils in a recently passed bill. These EMAs plan and help coordinate the activities needed to fight HIV and AIDS in their areas.

The CARE Act will also be short the critical $70 million boost for the Title II base that was essential to the final negotiations reauthorizing the Act. Many of the new, state-based provisions in Title II rely on this funding; without it, a number of states looking for increases in funding would instead lose out significantly—threatening existing medical service infrastructures and the health and well-being of CARE Act clients.

The Bush administration provided $25 million for Title III in its FY 2007 budget. These resources would expand HIV medical access for people living with HIV/AIDS in rural and geographically isolated regions. Title III funds can be used by HIV/AIDS service organizations to do risk reduction counseling, antiretroviral therapy, protection

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Economic justice issue

Help children get health care

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

Assembly Bill 1, authored by Assembly-member Merv Dymally (D–Compton), would simplify requirements for families with limited income to obtain health care for their children. Currently there are about 800,000 children in California without health care. Some children were removed from public health coverage because of "bureaucratic red tape" and holes in eligibility requirements. The families of other children found it difficult to enroll their children in these programs because of the red tape.

AB 1 seeks to close the holes by coordinating the work of the Medi-Cal program administered by the State Department of Health Care Services and county welfare agencies, and the Healthy Families Program administered by the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, and by streamlining the qualification process.

According to the bill's language, "Any reforms designed to reach all children must build and improve upon the Medi-Cal program and the Healthy Families Program, local enrollment and retention innovations, and available technologies to enroll more children."

This bill is important for several reasons.

First, current law allows for families at 200% of the federal poverty level to apply for Medi-Cal benefits for their children. This bill not only raises the qualification level to 300% of the federal poverty level but would provide health care benefits while eligibility is determined for the Healthy Families Program. The bill requires that on July 1, 2008, a family's maximum required contribution to their children's health care will be $20 per child or a maximum of $60 per month per family *whose annual incomes are between 250–300% of the federal poverty level.*

The intent of the bill is clear: "Children with health care coverage are healthier and perform better in school. California's investment in children's health care coverage has been successful. For example, children enrolled in the Healthy Families Program have shown a 25 percent improvement in health and a 68 percent improvement in their

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LGBTI issue

Finally end discrimination in business services

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

Assembly Bill 14 supplements the Unruh Civil Rights Act by broadening the categories of people protected by the Act. The Unruh Civil Rights Act entitles all persons to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments, regardless of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, or sexual orientation.

AB 14 would amend a wide array of state government codes relating to business services to bring them into conformity with the Unruh Civil Rights Act. For example:

Service providers who hold state licenses are currently barred from discriminating against a recipient's race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, disability, marital status, or national origin. AB 14 adds medical condition and sexual orientation to this list

Credit card companies or credit unions are barred from discriminating based on sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin, or on the basis of a person's lawful business association. AB 14 adds disability, medical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation.

Horse racing establishments are barred from preventing anyone onto the grounds based on race, color, creed, national origin or ancestry, or sex. AB 14 adds religion, disability, medical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation.

AB 14 disallows sports clubs from discriminating based on sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Alcoholic establishments are currently barred from discriminating based on age, sex, race, religion, color, ancestry, or national origin. If they do, they will not be permitted to use receipts for tax-deductible purposes. AB 14 adds ethnic group identification, sexual orientation, and disability to the list.

No person eligible as a trial juror may be eliminated from a jury by reason of

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People of color issue

Help immigrants become citizens, receive services

By Marty Martinez, legislative analyst

Although immigrants are frequently the subject of politically motivated cheap shots, Governor Schwarzenegger has recently called for universal health insurance that would include covering all immigrants. While there are problems with his proposal, the issue of immigrants and their inclusion in our society is again a top issue. Maybe we can avoid some of the usual scapegoating in this current environment and pass legislation that supports immigrants becoming citizens and receiving services to improve their lives.

SB 1 by Senator Gilbert Cedillo (D–Los Angeles) would establish an Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) within the Department of Community Services and Development to ensure the integration and civic participation of new residents in the state.

The OIA would advocate and promote cooperation and understanding between government agencies and immigrant residents; ensure that immigrants receive the assistance they need, including citizenship assistance, in order to promote their full integration into our society; and establish an advisory committee to serve as a liaison between the Office of Immigrant Affairs and immigrant communities throughout the state.

SB 1 will ensure that California continues to reap the economic and cultural benefits of its immigrant communities by facilitating their successful integration into the fabric of our state. Tell your state senator to support this important reform. Ask him or her to cosponsor the bill.

Women's issue

Urge equality for men who take the wife's name

By Joy Fisher, legislative analyst

Michael Buday believes that taking his wife's last name after getting married should be an easy affair. So does Assemblymember Fiona Ma (D–San Francisco). Instead, he has to fight for it.

Buday made headlines in January when, with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, he filed a federal lawsuit alleging he had been discriminated against when he attempted to take the last name of his wife, Diana Bijon, after the couple married. Ma is a first-term Assembly member who isn't waiting for the court's decision before attempting to fix the problem.

Buday wanted to take Bijon's last name because her father was "the first real father figure" he'd had in his life. Bijon wanted him to take her last name to preserve her father's family name because he has no sons. The couple ran into a number of problems in achieving their goal, however.

First, when they applied for a marriage application in Los Angeles County, they discovered that—while the application provides a space for the bride to enter her married name should she want to take her spouse's last name—it does not provide a comparable space for the groom.

Next, when they got married and asked employees at the Beverly Hills courthouse how Buday could change his name, they told him he would need a court order, which would require filing a petition, paying a $320 fee, and advertising the proposed name change for four weeks in a local newspaper.

When Buday instead presented his marriage license to a Santa Monica branch of the Department of Motor Vehicles in an attempt to change the name on his driver's license, DMV representatives laughed at him and ridiculed him for wanting to take his wife's name, even though official DMV policy says "people" can change the name on their driver's license by presenting a valid marriage certificate.

Assemblymember Ma thinks times are changing—and government should too. "It's really gender equality, in terms of marriage," Ma said.

To correct the problem, she has introduced AB 102, which mandates that forms for a marriage license shall contain spaces for either party to indicate a change in his or her last name to the spouse's.

If the bill passes, California will not be breaking new ground. Six states already give either spouse the right to choose the other's last name: Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, and North Dakota.

AB 102 was introduced on January 3 and can be heard in committee anytime after February 3.

Let your Assembly member know it shouldn't take a federal case to establish equal treatment on this issue. Support AB 102 by asking your Assembly member to cosponsor AB 102.

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February legislative update

The legislature is now in the process of introducing the new bills for 2007. Legislators are allowed to introduce bills until February 23. With rare exceptions, they will not be permitted to introduce more bills after that until next year.

Here is the list of bills we are tracking this year so far.

HIV/AIDS issues

AB 66 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require that prison inmates be tested for HIV shortly after imprisonment and shortly before release from prison. If found to be HIV-positive prior to release from prison, inmates' parole officers must be told.
Status: Introduced.
0LLP position: Watch.

AB 110 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments that establish clean needle and syringe exchange programs to use state general funds to purchase clean needles and syringes for use in their programs.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SCR 3 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To request the Department of Transportation to erect informational signs on a specified portion of State Highway Route 5, in the County of Los Angeles, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, directing motorists to The Wall–Las Memorias Project AIDS monument.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

Economic issues

AB 1 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To improve children's access to health insurance.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To continue a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who are otherwise uninsurable due to medical history.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 8 (Fabian Núñez D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To express the intent of the legislature that every Californian should have access to affordable health coverage.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 10 (Hector De La Torre, D–South Gate)
Purpose: To express the intent of the legislature that all working people and their families have access to affordable basic health insurance and have a choice of plans.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 12 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the employees of small businesses.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 17 (Bill Emerson, R–Rancho Cucamonga)
Purpose: To assess a $50 fee on anyone seeking to obtain or renew a dental license. The money would be used to provide incentives for dentists to work in dentally underserved areas.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 20 (Mike Eng, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To express the intent of the legislature to make affordable health insurance accessible to working people and their families.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 30 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To declare the intent of the legislature to provide for reducing costs and improving the quality of health care for working Californians and their families by minimizing administrative overhead; assuring that those working Californians and their families receive timely access to appropriate health care; and identifying and reducing health care that is both high-cost and low-quality.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position. Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 53 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To express the intent of the legislature that all residents of California have access to affordable health insurance.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 55 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To increase the allowable income that people can earn and still qualify for Medi-Cal from 100% of the federal poverty level to 133% of the federal poverty level.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 56 (Richard Alarcon, D–San Fernando)
Purpose: To create a Secretary of Poverty to review state programs that serve people on limited incomes to make sure those programs are effective.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 71 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To state that the minimum wage in California will be adjusted automatically each year in accordance with inflation in the prior year.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 75 (Sam Blakeslee, R–San Luis Obispo)
Purpose: To express the legislature's intent to create a Healthy Choices plan to provide health coverage to those Californians without coverage.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

AB 98 (Roger Niello, R–Sacramento)
Purpose: To allow CalWORKs participants to fulfill their community service obligation in private industry, not just in working for government or a nonprofit agency.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 3 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to increase funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SB 20 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To provide additional funds to schools that provide free meals to students in families with limited income and to provide automatic adjustments to those funds in accordance with changes to the cost of living.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SB 32 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To declare the legislature's intent to allow all California children whose family income is under 300% of the federal poverty level access to affordable, comprehensive health coverage; to improve and modernize the process of enrolling children in coverage and maintaining their enrollment; to provide sustainable financing for children's health care coverage; and to ensure interim coverage for children currently receiving health care coverage through local Children's Health Initiatives.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if intent language is made actual.

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Legislative Update

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SB 42 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To qualify for CalWORKs public assistance, people must be engaged in work activities, with certain exceptions, unless they are enrolled in an approved education program. This bill would also exempt them from work if they have applied for, but not yet been accepted by, an approved education program.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SB 51 (Denise Moreno Ducheny, D–Chula Vista)
Purpose: To require the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board to contract with San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage to establish a pilot project to assist employers in providing health insurance to their full-time employees. Assistance might include establishing a premium assistance program and criteria for participation in the project by employers and employees, and an essential benefits package consisting of health care benefits and dental coverage to be offered by participating health care service plans.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

LGBTI issues

AB 11 (Chuck Devore, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To require that, upon the death of a person issued special auto license plates, the plates be transferred to the surviving spouse, if he or she requests, or be returned to the Department of Motor Vehicles within 60 days after the death of the plate holder or upon the expiration of the vehicle registration, whichever occurs first.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support if domestic partners are added.

AB 14 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To prohibit California businesses from withholding services to customers because of the customer's sexual orientation, among other things, or from encouraging other businesses to do so.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 43 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to marry in California.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SB 11 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow virtually any two persons to become domestic partners in California. This eliminates the need for domestic partners to be a same-sex couple or for one of them to be over age 62.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Watch.

People of color issues

AB 9 (Bob Huff, R–Diamond Bar)
Purpose: To require voters to provide evidence of their identity before voting. Acceptable evidence of identity would include: a California driver's license; a California identification card; a United States military identification card; a United States passport; a tribal enrollment card or other form of tribal identification; or other United States federal, state, or local government issued identification.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Watch.

AB 34 (Anthony Portantino, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To require the state to create a pilot program to increase the ethnic diversity of the umbilical cord blood supply in blood banks. It would select blood banks in ethnically diverse areas to participate in the program.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 46 (Van Tran, R–Costa Mesa)
Purpose: To make it a felony to use intimidation to try to prevent someone who has the right to vote from actually voting.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 72 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require schools to teach about the contributions of Filipinos during World War II.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 74 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To request that the Regents of the University of California establish and administer an Institute for the Study of the Phenomenon of Obesity and Diabetes Experimental Research (PODER) at the University of California, Irvine, in coordination with the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science; and to establish and administer one or more clinics that are affiliated with the PODER Institute to focus on individuals or groups who suffer from obesity and diabetes.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 107 (Cameron Smyth, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To require any employer bidding on a state contract to certify that none of the prospective bidders' employees are unauthorized aliens, as defined.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Oppose.

AJR 1 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to designate the Charles R. Drew College of Medicine and Science as a historically black college, university, and graduate school.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to give veterans benefits to Filipino Americans who served in the US armed services during World War II and to ask that efforts be made to speed up reunification of them and their families, where their families are awaiting visas.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

SB 1 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create an Office of Immigrant Affairs to help immigrants successfully integrate into American society. It would authorize the office to enter contracts with nonprofit groups to help the process.
Status: Introduced. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 3 (Tom Harman, R–Huntington Beach)
Purpose: To enact several ways to punish undocumented immigrants for being here without proper documents.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Oppose.

SB 26 (Joseph Simitian, D–Palo Alto)
Purpose: To require state agencies to allow people to select one or more categories when agencies obtain information about people's ethnicity.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

Women's issues

AB 16 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require sixth grade girls to be vaccinated against the HPV virus as a condition of attending school unless their parents ask for an exemption.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 28 (Jared Huffman, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To extend the program that allows people to send additional dollars with their state income tax returns, and to ask that the extra money be given to the California Breast Cancer Research Fund.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 76 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require that female prison inmates convicted of nonviolent crimes be housed separately from more violent offenders.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AB 102 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow a woman to retain her maiden name when she marries. It would allow men to easily change their last name to their wife's maiden name when they marry.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

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More about HPV

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

As we mentioned in the January newsletter, SB 1245, a bill signed last year, requires insurance companies and health care service providers to test women for the HPV virus as part of their annual gynecological exams.

This is an important advance because HPV is widespread in the general population and is one of the main causes of cervical cancer among women. It is also important for women who are HPV-negative to get vaccinated for the virus in order to prevent themselves from becoming infected.

Introduced this year, AB 16 would, if passed and signed by the governor, require that all sixth-grade girls be vaccinated for HPV in order to attend school. The law would allow parents to get an exemption from this rule for their child.

It's great that private insurance companies and health care service providers are now required to pay for these HPV tests However, a significant number of people in California are on a limited income and receive their health care from state-funded programs.

Here is some information about what two of those programs provide.

We are told by the staff at the California Department of Health Services that the Medi-Cal program will pay doctors for the cost of administering the HPV vaccine. They say the vaccine itself is provided to qualified medical professionals at no cost through the federal Vaccines for Children Program. So children who have health insurance through Medi-Cal should be able to get the vaccine at no cost.

Similarly, women who receive insurance through the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board can have an HPV screening paid for if it is part of an annual cervical cancer screening. The board will also pay for the vaccine for women under 16 years old.

Because we think it is important for girls to be vaccinated for HPV, we will be asking you in the coming months to sign or submit letters in support of AB 16.

Please sponsor a bill

Continued from page 1

each of these bills. Each special mailing would have six letters which you could sign and return to us. The letters would have your name and address as usual. Some of them would be addressed to the members of the committees that will vote on the bill. Other letters would be addressed to your particular legislators and would urge them to vote for the bill on the floor of the Senate or Assembly.

Such an effort is expensive, however. It will probably cost us about $450 for postage, supplies, and staff time to conduct each mailing. Because our funds are limited, donations would need to cover the cost of these mailings beforehand.

So we are asking that you consider sponsoring one of these bills by sending us a check for $450 or whatever part of it you can afford. Once we have the necessary funding for a bill, we will send out the special mailing on that bill.

Let us know which bill you want to sponsor by writing the bill's number on the memo line of your check. If you want to sponsor the health insurance bill, which currently has no number, just put the words "insurance bill" on the memo line of your check. Please send your check to us in the remittance envelope which is addressed to our treasurer.

You can make history. You can help us get these bills passed and signed into law. Please help us do that by sponsoring one of these bills. Please help us make that happen.

All we ask is a member a month

Continued from page 1

and that threatens the continued existence of these vital programs.

Senator Sheila Kuehl will soon reintroduce her Single Payer Health Insurance bill. This bill will provide affordable, comprehensive health insurance for every California resident.

Each of these bills was approved by the state legislature last year. However, two of the bills were vetoed by the governor. The third was not sent to him because he made it clear that he would veto it.

Many groups oppose these good bills. They will be flooding the legislature with letters, phone calls, and faxes in opposition to the bills. And legislators will have a built-in inclination to vote against the bills because the bills are controversial and the governor killed them last year. Legislators will be inclined not to use up any of their political capital by voting for controversial bills they think the governor will veto anyway.

So we need to bury the legislature with mail in support of these key bills. Here is my plan.

Currently we have just 1,150 members throughout California. I would like to double or triple that number. We could do that, and more, if you would pledge to find one new member for Lambda Letters each month. You know us well. You know the good work we do. You know how easy we make it for you to influence the legislation that affects your life. So you are in a very good position to persuade others to join the cause.

Won't you pledge to find one new member for us each month? You can sign them up by completing the information on the small remittance envelope that came with this newsletter. It would be great if the new member could also pay the requested dues. Our work does cost us money. But we will accept people on limited incomes who cannot pay dues.

Help us find one new member a month. In that way we can build a letter writing campaign that will overwhelm any who oppose the good legislation needed by you, our members.

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New bill protects domestic partners

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

Even though AB 17 was signed by the governor in 2003, it did not become effective until January 1 of this year. This bill states that any employer who enters into a contract with the state for $100,000 or more may not discriminate in the provision of benefits between the spouses and the domestic partners of its employees.

For example, if such an employer provides health insurance to the spouses of its employees, it must provide them to the domestic partners of its employees as well.

AB 17 does not apply to contracts entered into prior to January 1, 2007. However, if those contracts extend beyond January 1, 2008, AB 17 does become effective on those contracts at the beginning of 2008.

Any contracts entered into before January 1, 2007, will become subject to AB 17 if they are amended after the end of 2006.

We have searched to find lists or directories of state contractors but have not been able to find such a list. Even though the Department of General Services is the overall agency in charge of state contracting, a representative of that department tells us that no such lists are kept by them or any other state agency.

If you work for a company that has contracts with the state, however, you might want to enquire with your employer. If your employer does have contracts with the state worth $100,000 or more, they would be subject to AB 17. If so, they must provide the same benefits to the domestic partners of their employees as they provide to the spouses of their employees.

Housing discrimination law takes effect

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

AB 2800 became effective on January 1. This wide-ranging law prohibits sexual orientation or gender identity–based discrimination in a wide range of activities related to housing.

It does so by applying the rules against employment and housing discrimination found in the California Fair Employment and Housing Act to a wide variety of other California code sections that regulate financing, construction, and occupancy of housing. As a result, this bill makes it illegal to discriminate against LGBT people (among others) in the financing, construction, and occupancy of housing.

Do you want to get a mortgage or buy a home? They cannot refuse you because of your sexual orientation or gender identity. Do you want to rent a home or apartment? The same is true.

AB 2800 would prohibit real estate agents from steering LGBT people away from certain properties. It would prohibit real estate deed restrictions that exclude the LGBT community. Mobile home parks, condominium associations, floating home marina park clubs, local government land use decisions, and community redevelopment projects all would be prohibited from having rules that exclude the LGBT community. This good new law will do much to put an end to egregious discrimination.

Economic justice issue

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ability to 'pay attention' and to 'keep up with school activities'."

Second, the bill would streamline the eligibility determination process by requiring state, federal, and county agencies to share information. For example, if a child is receiving reduced price school lunches, the school would send out an information packet to the student's parents informing them that their child may be eligible for free or reduced-cost health coverage. The information packet would state that the information provided would be confidential and not shared with any agency other than social services agencies (specifically, that the school district will not share the information with the Department of Homeland Security or the Social Security Administration).

The school would share with the Healthy Families Program any information that bears on whether a child might qualify for that program. This means that Healthy Families would not have to take time to gather this information all over again. The parent would have the option of opting out and asking the school lunch program not to share information about their child. Renewal of Healthy Family Program benefits each year would also be simplified and streamlined.

AB 1 allows a quicker determination process because it provides an online application that connects directly to the state eligibility database. That way, parents can request an accelerated eligibility determination and apply for ongoing medical assistance.

In addition, individuals who are eligible for the National School Lunch Program will not be required to submit any extra income information to establish income eligibility for an accelerated determination and ongoing medical assistance. Counties will be required to design and implement automated welfare programming systems (including Medi-Cal renewal) by July 1, 2008.

Please write to your Assembly member and ask him or her to cosponsor this bill. California should lead the nation in providing all of its youth with affordable health care.

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LGBTI issue

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occupation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, economic status, or sexual orientation, or for any other reason. This bill would add ethnic group identification, age, sex, sexual orientation, and disability as affected classes of people.

Existing law provides that an unpaid director or officer of a nonprofit organization can be sued for an act in which the organization discriminates based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, political affiliation, or age. This bill would allow directors or officers to be sued if they restrict membership, services, or benefits on the basis of ancestry, marital status, political affiliation, race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, and disability.

Existing law prohibits the funds of a community college district, California State University, or University of California to be used for membership with—or for any participation involving a financial payment or contribution to—any private organization whose membership practices are discriminatory on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin. AB 14 adds ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation.

Existing law requires Cal Grant Program awards to be awarded without regard to race, religion, creed, sex, or age. This bill adds color, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation.

Existing law prohibits a community college district, California State University, or University of California from participation in or funding of any private organization whose membership practices discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin. AB 14 adds ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation.

Existing law prohibits a county elections official from refusing to deputize a person to register voters because of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, or age. AB 14 adds ethnic group identification and sexual orientation.

This bill would prohibit the state or local involvement from the use of private facilities if the organization or facility discriminates on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin. Existing law also prohibits the legislative body of a local agency from using a facility which practices discrimination on the basis of those factors. AB 14 adds ancestry, ethnic group identification, age, sexual orientation, and disability.

Existing law prohibits the provision of emergency services and care to be based upon—or affected by—a person's race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, preexisting medical condition, physical or mental handicap, insurance status, economic status, or ability to pay for medical services—except as specified—and requires every hospital to adopt that policy. AB 14 adds color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, marital status, and sexual orientation.

State-funded county substance abuse programs are barred from discriminating against patients because of race, creed, age, religion, sex, sexual preference, or disabling conditions. AB 14 adds national origin, ethnic group identification, sexual orientation, and color.

Existing law prohibits a public utility from charging a person different rates or deposit amounts because of that person's race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, occupation, sex, marital status, or change in marital status. This bill would add sexual orientation.

The bill also adds additional protected classes to the receipt of state-funded health and social services.

AB 14 is important because it is obvious that there are Californians who have no legal redress if they experience bias or denial of goods and services in various industries. Please write your Assembly member and ask him or her to cosponsor AB 14.

HIV/AIDS issue

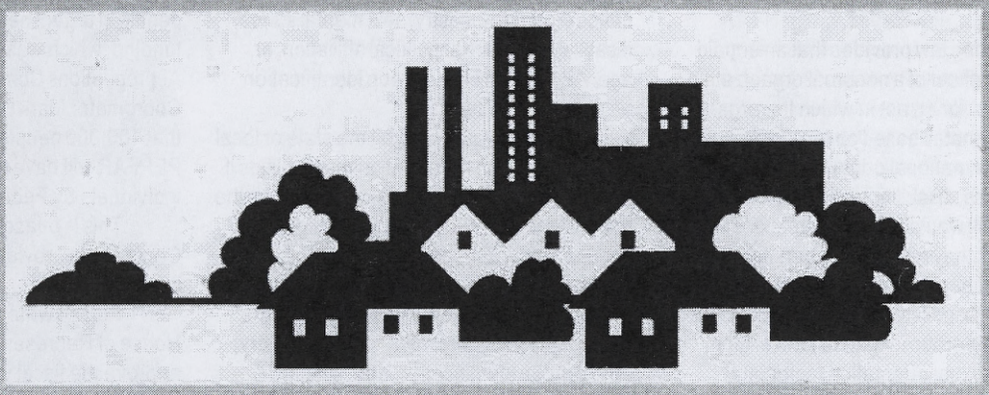
Continued from page 3

against opportunistic infections, and case management services for HIV infected clients.

If PEPFAR remains funded at FY 2006 levels, it will be short about $1 billion necessary to extend treatment to about 350,000 people in urgent need. Without this new funding, which was proposed by the Senate Appropriations Committee, Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul recently predicted that 100,000 people could die because PEPFAR will have to stop enrolling new individuals by February 2007.

This is unacceptable. We must call on Congress to provide these essential resources.

Please write to your member of the House of Representatives. Urge him or her to approve the fiscal year 2007 appropriations bills left unfinished by the 109th Congress. Please also urge your representative to be sure that those bills include increased funding for the Ryan White CARE Act and the Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.



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